**CUCBC Captain’s Meeting 18/4/21, 1900-2030.**

**Held virtually.**

**Attendance:**

**CUCBC Committee Members Present (SC=Senior Committee, EC=Executive Committee):**

Mark Jacobs (SC, Safety Advisor, Chairing), Conor Burgess (SC), Ian Cowley (SC), Matt Edge (EC, CUBC Sec., Minuting), Isabel Nimmo (EC, Coxing), Matthew Temple (EC), Limeng Zhu (EC, CUCBC Hon Sec, Minuting).

**Captains Present:**

Addenbrooke’s Men,  ARU Overall, Caius Men+Women+Overall, Churchill Women+Overall, Christ’s Women+Overall, Clare Men+Overall, Clare Hall Overall, Corpus Men+Women+Overall, Darwin Men+Women+Overall, Downing Men+Women+Overall, Emmanuel Men+Women+Overall, First and Third Men+ Overall, Fitzwilliam Men+Women+Overall, Girton Men+Women+Overall, Hughes Hall Men+Women, Jesus Men+Overall, King’s Men+Women, LMBC Men+Women, Lucy Cavendish Overall, Magdalene Men+Overall, Murray Edwards Overall, Newnham Womens+Overall, Pembroke Men+Women+Overall, Peterhouse Women+Overall, Queen’s Men+Women+Overall,  Robinson Men+Women, Selwyn Men, Sidney Sussex Men+Overall+Overall(in transition), St Catharine’s Men+Women+Overall, St Edmund’s Men+Overall, Trinity Hall Men+Women+Overall, Wolfson Men+Overall.

**Club(s) absent:** Homerton

**Agenda:**

* Meeting convenes with statement from CUCBC Committees
* Discussion and vote in regards to Easter term races to last at the latest until 1940
* Discussion and vote on evening hours
* CUCBC announcements: Safety audit, club bills, recruitment for CUCBC committee
* AOB

**Minutes:**

* CUCBC Senior Committee Statement on cancellation of bumps  (MJ):
  + The statement attached as Appendix 1 was read.
  + Downing (Overall) - on behalf of an indeterminate number of captains:
    - informal poll of captains has been taken with no complete consensus
    - Grievance over lack of consultation with college captains before decisions were taken
    - Raises that some colleges have many senior coxes, CB interjects that the SC decision took into account seniority of coxes and it is still a safety concern to have senior coxes without a year of coxing under their belt. Downing (Overall) continues that main concern is lack of communication with captains in the decision making process
  + MJ replied that the decision to cancel Bumps on safety grounds was made by the Senior Committee and the chief umpires as this requires the experience of years of organising and running bumps and as such it was not a decision for the captains to make. (Addended LZ: Nor Executive Committee). Senior Committee also has awareness of college matters as many are fellows or have ties to college leadership.
  + Girton (men’s):
    - Expresses disappointment on lack of willingness to cooperate together to run bumps
    - Asks how it can be expected to have future bumps races when next year, with even fewer experienced rowers and coxes present, can be run safely
  + MJ and CB stated they and the committee are comfortable with bumps being able to be run safely after two terms of normal training and other non-bumps racing, adding that this is based on c.100 years of collective experience and a network of Chief Umpires and Deputy Chief Umpires may need to be called to assist in safe running of Bumps in the immediate future. - IN followed up by pointing out that the safety of future races should not be a concern with the decision to run the event this year.
  + Queens’ (overall) - said Queens’ (and other colleges) have been letting students return relatively easily and then that there are several coxes with up to four years of experience and that these coxes are arguably not as incompetent as CUCBC make out.
  + MJ points out that in the Senior Committee's experience, the nastiest accidents are found in the upper divisions. In some cases, involving coxes fresh out of Ely, and not used to the traffic on the river and the twists and turns of the Cambridge course - CB points out that this decision was made by those with decades of experience who will be best positioned to make it.
  + Downing (men’s) - questions whether the decision was made with all the facts (that senior coxes are present and the presence of experienced coxes)
  + MJ clarifies that many members of the senior committee are also fellows of colleges or have close links with college leadership, and so are aware of the likely ability of students to return to Cambridge from their links.
  + Sidney Sussex (men’s) - points out that as a former trialling cox, suggests that too little faith is being placed in college coxes especially when not consulting the colleges and the process has not been democratic with respect to the captains; with agreement from Queen’s and Emmanuel.
  + MJ reiterates that the decision was made by the Senior Committee, i.e. those with the most experience in these matters and was by its nature, not intended to be, nor should it be, a democratic decision; also reiterating that many of the worst accidents come from senior coxes.
  + CB stated that he believed a novice cox who had coxed through a normal Michaelmas and Lent term [Addendum: and most likely coxing in a lower division with relatively slow crews] would be safer in Lent Bumps 2022 than a senior cox who had coxed for 3 years prior to Lents 2020 and then only coxed for seven or eight weeks [Addendum: during exam term], coxing in May Bumps 2021 [Addendum: where they would be coxing in the first division with relatively fast crews].
  + Magdalene (men’s) - thanked CUCBC for their efforts and time; asked for clarification on how the decision was made within the CUCBC, also asked about the minimum outing requirements and cox competence with the common event of trialists coming back to cox Easter term; questioned the earlier statement that a novice cox who had started in Michaelmas of an ordinary year and coxed through Lent would be better prepared for bumps than a senior cox who had coxed for a minimum of one to two ordinary years prior to COVID (as well as Michaelmas and Lent Terms of 2019-2020), as well as the entirety of this year’s Easter Term and some time prior to term following the 29th of March.
  + MJ outlines that the decision making process started through February and that by April, the decision by the committee was unanimous to cancel the race with a delay to July ruled out (which would have allowed more time to get high quality training in and time for covid restrictions to ease to allow large scale events) - it was noted that it is typically very much the minority of crews that scrape the minimum 12 outings, with only a few per division which would have a close eye kept on them from Senior Umpires, rather than whole divisions at a time.
  + IC notes that:
    - the decision made was a culmination of many factors, including coxing safety, covid restrictions and public safety, the effort of running two divisions is the same as running ten, the amount of students around
    - the weight of these decisions built to the extent that it was clear that running the event was neither the safe nor sensible thing to do, and with a heavy heart as it was not the decision that anyone wanted.
  + Hughes Hall (overall) Notes their submission of feedback and concern as requested before the Committee meeting and thanks the SC for their time and work put into this year, agreed with the decision and that thought the conversation should move onto discussing an alternative option to bumps rather than continuing to disagree on other viewpoints.
  + Emma (men’s) - in regards to Lents next year, worries that similar issues will come up and that this will lead to an indefinite cancellation of bumps.
  + IC- “I will move heaven and Earth to ensure that bumps happens next year” with normal rowing in Michaelmas next year, things should return to normal amounts of experience and the chief umpires will remain as experienced as ever.
  + LMBC (women’s) - notes that many clubs agree with the decision but takes issue with the way the decision was made and the assertion of MJ that the cancellation of Bumps on safety grounds should not be democratic  - “not how a democratic choice is made”
  + MJ points out that this decision is not intended to be democratic as it is not the captains who have the correct experience to make it - notes that this meeting was supposed to be about decisions regarding alternative racing, as set out in agenda and proposal.
  + IN points that in most years, it is by the skin of the teeth with which there is not a safety catastrophe and thus with the additional pressures of this year. It is the responsibility of the Senior Committee to step in, before the Insurers do and the next set of bumps risks lack of insurance and thus the end of bumps for all.
  + Fitz (men’s) - points out that running only the top divisions of bumps is against the inclusive nature of the event - asks whether it would be possible to get alumni back in future years to get those who have missed out in the past two years
  + Short answer is no - not enough daylight in Lents and would be a logistical nightmare to add another separate division - adding alumni to the main divisions would push out space for legitimate students - it is pointed out that Town bumps is good fun (with beer!) and that coaching a crew to and through bumps can also be a hugely rewarding experience
  + At this point MJ offered for Captains to table a motion to mandate the running of May bumps/an alternative of May Bumps, no captain proposed this motion.

* Easter term rowing (MJ, proposed by CUCBC Committees):
  + Proposal as sent out via email - Appendix 2
  + Two events on different weeks to allow exam flexibility:
    - A small boats/uni fours type race
  + Emma (women’s) - asks about whether those with exams in the week of the Eights regatta will be too enthused about doing a multi day regatta the week before.
  + It is noted that the dates are provisional and are flexible around exams (once either CUCBC or indeed students themselves know the dates of these) - there was general agreement to this
  + Pembroke (overall) - glad that Pembroke regatta is the model for a good race format but wonders if there is a way to get all/most crews to have plenty rows
    - Potential to have a plate (and then maybe a plate-plate/’spoon’) with crews who are knocked out getting further races
  + There was general agreement that this would be a viable option from CUCBC committees, on the proviso that there are enough daylight hours; with no formal disapproval from Captains
  + Pembroke (men’s) - questions why university medals won’t be given out for Small Boats Regatta - CB points out that it probably won’t reflect the standard of previous years where the winning small boat/uni four is indeed the fastest that the university has to offer but it is floated that university medals could be the prizes for both regattas as these regattas will be the pinnacle of this year’s rowing.
  + MT raises the questions sent around in a previous email:
    - Is there an appetite for a SBR/uni fours type event - voted for overwhelmingly in favour (37 in favour, 7 against, 31 abstain/not eligible to vote)
    - Would the captains rather have a race being chased line-a-stern or a side-by-side race down the reach - side-by-side was the majority preference (20 chasing, 38 side-by-side, 16 abstain/not eligible to vote)
    - Is there interest in a mixed eights (up to four men per crew) - majority answer was yes, depending on exam timetables/availability (28 yes, 17 no, 30 abstain/not eligible)
    - Would the captains want to run novice races over the same (longer) course as the novices or a shorter course - evenly split (32 short course, 31 long course, 12 abstain/not eligible to vote)
      * Pembroke (overall) notes that the 1100m used is already shorter than would be liked for a senior regatta
      * Emma (women’s) notes conversely Emma sprints is run over only 500m as it is only 6 weeks into a novice season and a shorter race
      * Downing (men’s) suggests that a longer course gives novices a bit more to get their teeth into and a corner gives the coxes some semblance of challenge
      * The poll was rerun and the longer course won a majority (46 long course 13 short course, 13 abstain/not eligible)

* Evening hours (MJ):
  + Typically hours are reserved for more senior crews and split between mens and womens crews and to give them a clearer run. Given the disruption to training this year, do the Captains want to de-regulate evening hours to give lower boats more opportunities to train?
  + St Edmund’s (overall) notes that all their seniors can fit in half an eight anyway and therefore feels that evening hours should be relaxed to allow novices.
  + CB clarified any club 1st boat may train in evening hours in any case, regardless of how many novices the crew has.
  + Straw poll: 34 evening hours with all senior NO novices, 25 free for all (scap all evening hours), 10 continue with current rules
  + Re-run: 39 seniors only in the evening, 29 free for all
    - MJ further clarified that any top boat (with or without novices) was senior [and thus eligible for evening hours]
  + It was then the majority opinion that the gender split would be removed (47 no gender split, 9 gender split)
* Announcements:
  + Safety audit will be sent around in the next week - this needs to be returned within a week of receiving.
  + Club bills (including any fines from Lents 2020) will be sent when appropriate, most likely when entry fees are due for this term’s events.
  + Most of the CUCBC Exec. Committee are leaving Cambridge this year: anyone who would like to get involved with CUCBC (or ask questions about the role and doing so), please do get in touch with Lee (limeng@cucbc.org) or the committee.
* AOB:
  + Nothing raised

**Written questions in chat function, unanswered during meeting- with written response:**

Queens' Women: Is there not a way to assess cox safety? I believe at Oxford they have a system to make sure coxes are safe to take place in bumps

MJ: Oxford is a different beast - their river is subject to stream/flood in a way that the Cam is not, and much wider, so they are likely more able to judge the experience level of a cox in isolation than we are. In any event, we don’t have the manpower to assess, note that Oxford have a dedicated sabbatical officer who is paid to do all that we do on a voluntary basis.

Queens' Men's Captain: I know we are not Oxford but how did they manage to run their bumps given all the concerns?

LZ: As far as CUCBC are aware, Oxford are running bumps in their “Torpids” fashion, meaning that there is no contact and that bumped crews continue to row and chase after their own bump, with the bumping crew winding down and clearing. This is only possible due to the nature of their river, which alongside many other considerations is much wider than ours. OURCS will have their own safety risk assessment which will be unique to their stretch of the river and have different hazards to the Cam.

MJ: To add, it would not be feasible to run a Torpids rules event on the Cam as we don’t physically have the space.

Christ's CoB: Surely this [meeting] serves to show that 1 hour does not provide sufficient time to discuss this complex issue [of the format of a May’s alternative]. Will there be further meetings in future to discuss the format for any Mays alternative?

LZ: Most likely yes, however this is a good starting point for to go away and come up with the plate/spoon format. Most likely in a format of the pre-bumps captain meeting, then briefing, if there are no objections to the detailed proposal.

CB: We didn’t expect to reach a concrete proposal in this meeting, but any further efforts on our part would have potentially been wasted without a clearer idea of what the Captains’ would like to see. For example, we hadn’t even considered the Swiss-system, so this can now feed into a much better final proposal, which Captains can then amend/approve.